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DOE

## ***HERITAGE COLLEGE EQUIPPED TO HELP MONITOR HANFORD OPERATIONS, WEATHER***

*Construction has been completed on an environmental monitoring station at Heritage College in Toppenish to help conduct environmental data-gathering activities in the Yakima Valley. The station is integral to the U.S. Department of Energy's network of environmental monitoring operations conducted on and around the Hanford Site by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.*

*The college received a \$30,000 grant to construct and operate the station as part of DOE's Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Program. Data from the station will be compiled with other monitoring data collected during the year and summarized in the annual Hanford Site environmental report. In addition to air monitoring equipment, the station includes information displays discussing station equipment, sample types and analyses, and a weather station.*

*Peter Alexander, assistant professor of mathematics at Heritage, will manage and operate the station. "This is a wonderful example of a project which benefits all the stakeholders: local communities, students and professional scientists," Alexander says. "The computerized weather station provides a hands-on opportunity for K-12 students to understand computer displays in terms of their own experiences with the weather. Using data from the station, Heritage College students will be able to apply and enhance their learning by analyzing local weather patterns and trends. Regional agricultural industries will have access to ground temperature and moisture profiles to aid in frost watches and growth rate predictions and atmospheric and agricultural scientists will use the data to better understand the dynamics of microclimatology and its implications for the Yakima Valley."*

*For more than 50 years, scientists have monitored the environment on and around the Hanford Site for radioactive contaminants. The Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Program was established in 1991. The Heritage College station is one of nine monitoring facilities located near the Hanford Site. It is the only station with a complete meteorological tower and soil monitors.*

*"The stations have been installed to involve community members in Hanford environmental surveillance activities in an effort to increase the public's confidence in the data collected and to provide information on the monitoring program," says Bill Hanf, Project Task Leader, PNNL. The stations are managed by teachers who collect and prepare the air samples for submission to an independent analytical laboratory.*

*DOE's Richland Operations Office operates the Hanford Site in Southeastern Washington state. Hanford was established in secrecy during the Second World War to produce plutonium for America's nuclear weapons. Peak production years were reached in the 1960s when nine production reactors were in operation at the Site. All weapons material production was halted in the late 80s and the Site is now engaged in the world's largest environmental cleanup project.*

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